

A LETTER TO HIS GRACE THE
DUKE OF GRAFTON, FIRST
COMMISSIONER OF HIS
MAJESTY'S TREASURY.

By John Wilkes.

*Vacare culpâ magnum est solatium; præsertim cum habeam
duas res quibus me sustentem, optimarum artium scien-
tiam, et maximarum rerum gloriam, quarum altera mihi
viva nunquam eripietur, altera ne mortuo quidem*

Cicero.

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Paris, Dec. 12. 1766.

MY LORD,

I AM not yet recovered from the astonishment, into which I was thrown by your grace's *verbal* message, in answer to my letter of the first of November. In a conversation I had with colonel *Fitzroy* at the hotel d'*Espagne*, he did me the honour of assuring me, that I should find his brother my real and sincere friend, extremely desirous to concur in doing me justice, that he was to tell me this from your grace, but that many interesting particulars relative to me could not be communicated by letter, nor by the post.

I fondly believ'd these obliging assurances, because on a variety of occasions your grace had testified a full approbation of my conduct, had thanked me in the most flattering terms, as the person the most useful to the common cause in which we were embarked, and had shewn an uncommon zeal to serve a man who had suffered so much in the cause of liberty.

I returned to *England* with the gayest, and the most lively hopes. As soon as I arrived at London, I desired my excellent friend, *Mr. Fitzherbert*, to wait on your grace, with every profession of regard on my part, and the resolution I had taken of entirely submitting the mode of the application I should make to the throne for my pardon. I cannot express the anxiety, which your grace's answer gave me, *Mr. Wilkes must write to lord Chatham*. I then begged *Mr. Fitzherbert* to state the reasons, which made it impossible for me to follow that advice, from every principle of honour, both public and private. I shewed too the impropriety of suppli-

cating a fellow subject for mercy, the *prerogative* good Kings are the most jealous of, by far the brightest jewel in their crown, and the attribute, by which they may the nearest approach to the Divinity.

I afterwards wrote the letter * to your grace, which I have seen in all the public prints. I never received any other answer but a *verbal* message, Mr. *Wilkes* must

* *That Letter was as follows.*

My Lord,

IT is a very peculiar satisfaction I feel, on my return to my native country, that a nobleman of your grace's superior talents, and inflexible integrity, is at the head of the most important department of state. I have been witness of the general applause, which has been given abroad, to the choice his majesty has made, and I am happy to find my own countrymen zealous and unanimous in every testimony of their approbation.

I hope, my Lord, that I may congratulate myself, as well as my country, on your grace's being placed in a station of so great power and importance. Though I have been cut off from the body of his majesty's subjects, by a cruel and unjust proscription, I have never entertained an idea inconsistent with the duty of a good subject. My heart still retains all its former

* *this message. I was informed it erroneously appeared*

write to lord Chatbam: I do nothing without lord Chatbam. When I found that my pardon was to be bought with the sa-

warmth for the dignity of England, and the glory of its sovereign. I have not associated with the traitors to our liberties, nor made a single connection with any man who was dangerous, or even suspected by the friends of the protestant family on the throne. I now hope that the rigour of a long-unmerited exile is past, and that I may be allowed to continue in the land, and among the friends of liberty.

I wish, my lord, to owe this to the mercy of my prince. I entreat your grace to lay me with all humility at the king's feet, with the truest assurances, that I have never, in any moment of my life, swerved from the duty and allegiance I owe to my sovereign, and that I implore, and in every thing submit to, his majesty's clemency.

Your grace's noble manner of thinking, and the obligations I have formerly received, which are still fresh in my mind, will, I hope, give a full propriety to this address; and I am sure a heart, glowing with the sacred zeal of liberty, must have a favourable reception from the duke of G----. I flatter myself, that my conduct will justify your grace's interceding with a prince, who is distinguished by a compassionate tenderness and goodness to all his subjects.

I am, with the truest respect, My Lord,

*Your Grace's most obedient, and most humble
servant,*

JOHN WILKES.

crifice of my honour, I had the virtue not to hesitate. I spurn'd at the proposal, and left my dear native London with a heart full of grief that my fairest hopes were blasted, of humiliation, that I had given an easy faith to the promises of a minister and a courtier, and of astonishment that a nobleman of parts and discernment could continue in an infatuation, from which the conduct of *lord Chatham* had recovered every other man in the nation. He was indeed long the favourite character of our countrymen. Every tongue was wanton in his praise. The whole people lavished on him their choicest favours, and endeavoured by the noblest means, by an unbounded generosity and confidence, to have kept him virtuous. With what anguish were we at last undeceiv'd! How much it cost us to give up a man, who had so long entirely kept possession of our hearts! How cruel was the struggle! But alas! how is he changed? how fallen? from what height fallen? His glorious sun is set, I believe never to rise again.

We long hoped, my lord, that public virtue was the *guide* of his actions, and the love of our country his ruling passion, but he has fully shewn *omnis vis virtusque in lingua sita est*. Our hearts glowed with gratitude for the important services he had done against the common enemy, and the voice of the nation hailed him our deliverer; but private ambition was all the while skulking behind the shield of the patriot, and at length in an evil hour made him quit the scene of all his glory, the only place, in which he could be truly useful, for a retreat, where he knew it was impossible the confidence of the people could follow, but where he might in inglorious ease bear his BLUSHING *honours thick upon him*.

I might now, my lord, expostulate with your grace on a *verbal* message, and of such a nature, in answer to a letter couch'd in the most decent and respectful terms, coming too from a late member of the legislature. I might regret, that the largest proffers of friendship, and real ser-

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vice, could mean no more than two or three words of cold advice, that I should apply to another. I might be tempted to think it a duty of office in the first lord of the treasury to have submitted to his majesty a petition relative to the exercise of the noblest act of regal power, which any constitution can give any sovereign. Surely, my lord, my application to the first commissioner of the treasury, who is always considered as the first minister in England, was the very proper application. As I had made no discovery of any new wonderful pill or drop, nor pretended to the secret of curing the gout or the tooth-ach, I never thought of soliciting *Lord Chatham for a privy seal*. His lordship's office was neither important, nor responsible. I will not however enlarge on this, but I shall desire your grace's permission fully to state what has happened to me as a private gentleman relative to *lord Chatham*, because I would not leave a doubt concerning the propriety of my conduct, in a mind naturally so candid, and so ca-

But I have not time to say more.

pable of judging truly, as that of the *duke of Grafton*.

I believe that the flinty heart of L—C—— has known the sweets of private friendship, and the fine feelings of humanity, as little as even ———. They are both formed to be admired, not beloved. A proud, insolent, overbearing, ambitious man is always full of the ideas of his own importance, and vainly imagines himself superior to the equality necessary among real friends, in all the moments of true enjoyment. Friendship is too pure a pleasure for a mind cankered with ambition, or the lust of power and grandeur. *Lord Chatbam* declared in parliament the strongest attachment to *lord Temple*, one of the greatest characters our country could ever boast, and said, *he would live and die with his noble brother*. He has received obligations of the first magnitude from that *noble brother*, yet what trace of gratitude or of friendship was ever found in any part of his conduct? And has he not now declared the most

open variance, and even hostility? I have had as warm and express declarations of regard as could be made by this marble-hearted friend, and *Mr. Pitt* had no doubt, his views in even feeding me with flattery from time to time; on occasions too where candour and indulgence were all I could claim. He may remember the compliments he paid me on two certain poems in the year 1754. If I were to take the declarations made by himself and the late *Mr. Potter à la lettre*, they were more charmed with those verses after the ninety ninth reading than after the first; so that from this circumstance, as well as a few of his speeches in parliament, it seems to be likewise true of the first orator, or rather the first comedian, of our age, *non displicuisse illi jocos, sed non contigisse.*

I will now submit to your grace, if there was not something peculiarly base and perfidious in *Mr. —*'s calling me a *blasphemer of my God* for those very verses, at a time when I was absent, and dangerously ill from an affair of honour. The charge

too he knew was false, for the whole ridicule of those two pieces was confined to certain mysteries, which formerly the *unplaced and unpensioned Mr. P--* did not think himself obliged even to affect to believe. He added another charge equally unjust, that I was the *libeller of my king*, though he was sensible that I never wrote a single line disrespectful to the sacred person of my sovereign, but had only attacked the despotism of his ministers, with the spirit becoming a good subject, and zealous friend of his country. The reason of this perfidy was plain. He was then beginning to pay homage to the *Scottish* Idol, and I was the most acceptable sacrifice he could offer at the shrine of BUTE. History scarcely gives so remarkable a change; He was a few years ago the mad, seditious tribune of the people, insulting his sovereign even in his capital city, now he is the abject, crouching deputy of the proud Scot, who he declared in parliament *wanted wisdom, and held principles incompatible with freedom*; a most ridiculous character surely for a statesman, and

the subject of a free kingdom, but the very proper composition for a *favourite*. Was it possible for me after this to write a suppliant letter to L— Cb——? I am the first to pronounce myself most unworthy of a pardon, if I could have obtained it on those terms.

Although I declare, my lord, that the conscious pride of virtue makes me look down with contempt on a man, who could be guilty of this baseness, who could in the lobby declare that I must be supported, and in the house on the same day desert and revile me, yet I will on every occasion do justice to the minister. He has served the public in all those points, where the good of the nation coincided with his own private views; and in no other. I venerate the memory of the secretary, and I think it an honour to myself that I steadily supported in parliament an administration, the most successful we ever had, and which carried the glory of the nation to the highest pitch in every part of the world. He found his country almost in

despair. He raised the noble spirit of England, and strained every nerve against our enemies. His plans, when in power, were always great, though in direct opposition to the declarations of his whole life, when out of power. The invincible bravery of the British troops gave success even to the most rash, the most extravagant, the most desperate of his projects. He saw early the hostile intentions of Spain, and if the *written advice* had been followed, a very few weeks had then probably closed the last general war; although the merit of that *advice* was more the merit of his *noble brother*, than his own. After the omnipotence of lord Bute in 1761 had forced Mr. Pitt to retire from his majesty's councils, and the cause was declared by himself to be our conduct relative to Spain, I had the happiness of setting that affair in so clear and advantageous a light, that he expressed the most entire satisfaction, and particular obligations to my friendship. I do not however make this a claim of merit to Mr,

Pitt. It was my duty, from the peculiar advantages of information I then had.

The constitution of our country has no obligations to him. He has left it with all its beauties, and all its blemishes. He never once appeared in earnest about any question of liberty. He was the cause that in 1764 no point was gained for the public in the two great questions of GENERAL WARRANTS, and the SEIZURE OF PAPERS. The cursed remains of the court of Star-chamber, the enormous power of the attorney-general, the sole great judicial officer of the crown, who is *durante bene placito*, and not upon oath, who tramples on *grand juries*, and breaks down the first, the foremost barriers of liberty, continued during his administration the same as before. Every grievance, which was not rooted out by the glorious revolution, and the latter struggles of our patriots, still subsists in full force, notwithstanding the absolute power he exercised for several years over every department of the state. But I have done with

L—C—. I leave him to the poor consolation of a place, a pension, and a peerage, for which he has sold the confidence of a great nation. Pity shall find, and weep over him.

I am now, my lord, once more driven from the *Romans*, to the gay, the polite *Athenians*, but I shall endeavour to convince your grace that I am not totally lost to my country nor to myself, in this scene of elegant dissipation, and that I do not waste the time in unavailing complaints of my hard fate, and the ingratitude of those I have served with success, for I shall very soon beg to call the public attention to some points of national importance, and in the mean time I shall embrace this opportunity of doing myself justice against the calumnies, which a restless faction does not cease to propagate.

The affair of the GENERAL WARRANT, and the HABEAS CORPUS, is told very unfaithfully, and almost every parti-

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cular, relative to my being made a prisoner, and sent to the Tower on the 30th of April 1763, has been injuriously misrepresented in several late publications. I shall therefore state the transactions of that memorable day, and I may appeal to the minutes taken at the time for the accuracy of this relation.

On my return from the city early in the morning, I met at the end of Great George-street one of the king's messengers. He told me that he had a *warrant* to apprehend me, which he must execute immediately, and that I must attend him to lord Halifax's. I desired to see the *warrant*. He said it was *against the authors, printers, and publishers of the North Briton*, No. 45, and that his verbal orders were to arrest *Mr. Wilkes*. I told him the *warrant* did not respect me: I advised him to be very civil, and to use no violence in the street, for if he attempted force, I would put him to death in the instant, but if he would come quietly to my house, I would convince him of the illegality of

the *warrant*, and the injustice of the orders he had received. He chose to accompany me home, and then produced the *GENERAL WARRANT*. I declared that such a *warrant* was absolutely illegal and void in itself, that it was a ridiculous *warrant* against the whole English nation; and I asked why he would serve it on me, rather than on the lord chancellor, on either of the secretaries, on lord Bute, or lord Corke, my next door neighbour. The answer was, *I am to arrest Mr. Wilkes*. About an hour afterwards two other messengers arrived, and several of their assistants. They all endeavoured in vain to persuade me to accompany them to lord Halifax's. I had likewise many civil messages from his lordship to desire my attendance. My only answer was, that I had not the honour of visiting his lordship, and this first application was rather rude and ungentleman-like.

While some of the messengers and their assistants were with me, *Mr. Churchill*

came into the room. I had heard that their *verbal* orders were likewise to apprehend him, but I suspected they did not know his person, and by presence of mind I had the happiness of saving my friend. As soon as Mr. *Churchill* entered the room, I accosted him, *Good morrow, Mr. Thomson. How does Mrs. Thomson do to-day? Does she dine in the country?* Mr. *Churchill* thanked me, said she then waited for him, that he only came for a moment to ask me how I did, and almost directly took his leave. He went home immediately, secured all his papers, and retired into the country. The messengers could never get intelligence where he was. The following week he came to town, and was present both the days of hearing at the court of Common Pleas.

The whole morning pass'd in messages between lord Halifax and me. The business of the messengers being soon publickly known, several of my friends came to me on so extraordinary an event. I desired two or three of them to go to the

court of COMMON PLEAS, to make affidavit of my being made a prisoner in my own house under an illegal *warrant*, and to demand a HABEAS CORPUS. The chief Justice gave orders that it should issue immediately.

A constable came afterwards with several assistants to the messengers. I repeatedly insisted on their all leaving me, and declared I would not suffer any one of them to continue in the room against my consent, for I knew and would support the rights of an englishman in the sanctuary of his own house. I was then threatened with immediate violence, and a regiment of the guards, if necessary. I soon found all resistance would be vain. The constable demanded my sword, and insisted on my immediately attending the messengers to lord Halifax's. I replied, that if they were not assassins, they should first give me their names in writing. They complied with this, and thirteen set their hands to the paper. I then got into my own chair,

and proceeded to lord Halifax's, guarded by the messengers and their assistants.

I was conducted into a great apartment fronting the park, where lord Halifax and lord Egremont, the two secretaries of state, were sitting at a table covered with paper, pens and ink. The under-secretaries stood near their lordships. Mr. Lovel Stanhope the law clerk, and Mr Philip Carteret Webb, the solicitor of the treasury, were the only persons besides who attended. Lord Egremont received me with a supercilious, insolent air; lord Halifax with great politeness. I was desired to take the chair near their lordships, which I did. Lord Halifax then began, *that he was really concerned that he had been necessitated to proceed in that manner against me, that it was exceedingly to be regretted that a gentleman of my rank and abilities could engage against his king and his majesty's government.* I replied, *that his lordship could not be more mistaken, for the king had not a subject more zealously attached to his person and government than myself, that I had all my life been a warm friend*

of the house of Brunswick, and the protestant succession, that while I made the truest professions of duty to the king, I was equally free to declare in the same moment, that I believed no prince had ever the misfortune of being served by such ignorant, insolent, and despotic ministers, of which my being there was a fresh, glaring proof, for I was brought before their lordships by force, under a GENERAL WARRANT, which named no body, in violation of the laws of my country, and of the privileges of parliament; that I beg'd both their lordships to remember my present declaration, that on the very first day of the ensuing session of parliament, I would stand up in my place and impeach them for the outrage they had committed in my person against the liberties of the people. Lord Halifax answered, that nothing had been done but by the advice of the best lawyers, and that it was now his duty to examine me. He had in his hand a long list of questions, regularly numbered. He began, Mr Wilkes do you know Mr. Kearsly? when did you see him? &c. &c. I replied, that I suspected there was a vain hope my answer would tend

rather to what his lordship wished to know, that he seemed to be lost in a dark, and intricate path, and really wanted much light to guide him thro' it, but that I could assure his lordship not a single ray should come from me. Lord Halifax returned to the charge, Mr Wilkes do you know Mr Kearsly? &c. &c. I said, that this was a curiosity on his lordship's part, which however laudable in the secretary, I did not find myself disposed to gratify, and that at the end of my examination all the quires of paper on their lordship's table should be as milk white as at the beginning. Lord Halifax then desired to remind me of my being their prisoner, and of their right to examine me. I answered, that I should imagine their lordships' time was too precious to be trifled away in that manner, that they might have seen before I would never say one word they desired to know, and I added, Indeed, my lords, I am not made of such slight, flimsy stuff; then, turning to lord Egremont, I said, could you employ tortures, I would never utter a word unbecoming my honour, or affecting the sacred confidence of any friend. God has given me

firmness and fidelity. You trifle away your time most egregiously, my lords. Lord Halifax then advised me, to weigh well the consequences of my conduct, and the advantages to myself of a generous, frank confession, I lamented the prostitution of the word, GENEROUS, to what I should consider as an act of the utmost treachery, cowardice and wickedness. His lordship then asked me, if I chose to be prisoner in my own house, at the Tower, or in Newgate, for he was disposed to oblige me. I gave his lordship my thanks, but, I desired to remark, that I never received an obligation, but from a friend, that I demanded justice, and my immediate liberty, as an englishman, who had not offended the laws of his country; that as to the rest, it was beneath my attention, the odious idea of restraint was the same odious idea every where; that I would go where I pleased, and if I was restrained by a superior force, I must yield to the violence, but would never give colour to it by a shameful compromise; that every thing was indifferent to me in comparison of my honour and liberty; that I made my appeal to the laws; and had already by my friends

applied to the COURT OF COMMON PLEAS for the HABEAS CORPUS, which the chief Justice had actually ordered to be issued, and that I hoped to owe my discharge solely to my innocence, and to the vigour of the law in a free country. Lord Halifax then told me, that I should be sent to the Tower, where I should be treated in a manner suitable to my rank, and that he hoped the messengers had behaved well to me. I acknowledged that they had behaved with humanity, and even civility to me, notwithstanding the ruffian orders given them by his lordship's colleague. I then turned again to lord Egremont, and said, Your lordship's verbal orders were to drag me out of my bed at midnight. The first man, who had entered my bed chamber by force, I should have laid dead on the spot. Probably I should have fallen in the skirmish with the others. I thank God, not your lordship, that such a scene of blood has been avoided. Your lordship is very ready to issue orders, which you have neither courage to sign, nor I believe to justify. No reply was made to this. The conversation dropped.

Lord Halifax retired into another apartment. Lord Egremont continued fullen and silent about a quarter of an hour. I then made a few remarks on some capital pictures, which were in the room, and his lordship left me alone.

I was afterwards conducted into another apartment. I found there several of my friends, in argument with the most infamous of all the tools of that administration Mr. P—C———. He confirmed to me, that I was to be carried to the Tower, and *wished to know if I had any favours to ask.* I replied, *that I was used to confer, not to receive favours, that I was superior to the receiving any even from his Masters, that all I would say to him was, if my valet de chambre was allowed to attend me in the Tower, I should be shaved and have a clean shirt, if he was not, I should have a long beard, and dirty linnen.* Mr. W—, said, *that orders would be given for his admission at the Tower.* I complained of the shameful evasion of the Habeas Corpus in

sending me to the Tower, tho' the orders of the *chief justice Pratt* were known. Mr W^m made no reply to this. He came to visit me at the Tower in the beginning of my imprisonment, when I had not the permission to see any friend. I desired him almost at his first entrance to take his leave *for if I was not allowed to see those I loved, I would not see those I despised.*

While I continued in the Tower, I was pressed to offer bail in order to regain my liberty, and two of the first nobility desired to be my securities in the sum of £. 100,000 each. I was exceedingly gratefull for the offer, but would not accept it. I observed, that neither my health nor my spirits were affected, that I would by great temperance and abstinence endeavour to compensate the want of air and exercise, but if my health suffered in a dangerous way, I would then accept such generous offers, for I hoped to live that so noble a cause might be brought to a glorious issue for the liberties of my country. From the beginning of this arduous busi-

ness, I would not on any occasion give bail, by which I never involved any friend, and remained the perfect master of my own conduct.

I shall now, my lord, proceed to do myself justice against a calumny of ———, a p-r-s-n of the meanest natural parts, and infinitely beneath all regard, except from the ——— he bears, with the utmost discredit to himself, with equal disgrace and insufficiency to the public. I find the ——— acquainted, that —, upon Tuesday last, received a letter by the general post from Mr. W——, dated Paris the 11th instant, inclosing a paper in the French Language, purporting to be a Certificate of one of the French king's physicians, and of a surgeon of the said king's army, relating to the state of Mr. Wilkes's health, subscribed with two names, but not authenticated before a notary public, nor the signature thereof verified in any manner whatsoever. Then follow the *letter* and *certificate*. The insinuation is too plain

to be overlooked. The signature was verified by my letter. It is certain that the certificate was in all the usual forms; yet tho' the affair was determined with respect to me, and I was expelled the — on the same day, without any time being allowed for other proof, a regard to truth, and my own honour, made me give the most compleat answer to this. I sent a second certificate in the form they had prescribed themselves, attested by two notaries, and confirmed by the English E—. I wrote likewise again to — on the 5th of February following, but neither the second letter, certificate, or attestation, is to be found in the —. I have, however, my lord, taken care that they should be published, for in a free government like ours, I will endeavour through my life to emulate the spirit of ancient Rome, *provoco ad populum*; and while the people do not condemn me, I shall, perhaps in this, most certainly in every succeeding age, rise superior to any party cabal, or court faction. This step covered my enemies

with confusion, but was of no farther service to me. The party war against me ceased of course in ———, but flamed with equal fury in ———.

By the ———, page 723, I find that I am *guilty of writing and publishing the paper, intituled "The North Briton, No. 45,"* and that several witnesses were examined. There is not however in the ——— a single word of the evidence they gave, and it is well known that not one of them did, or could say any thing relative to the *authorship*. The evidence of the publication was exceeding slight, but the willingness of the j— made ample amends for the deficiency of the witnesses, who were not upon oath. The administration did not chuse to risk either of these charges against me even in the court of Kings-Bench, and I was only tried for a *re-publication*. I will never blush at the imputation of being the *author* of that paper, because I know that truth is respected in every line. One circum-

stance will soon fully appear to the indignant public; I mean the large debt on the civil list, contracted chiefly by the scandalous purchase of a ——— approbation of the late ignominious *peace*, the arbitrary *excise*, and other ruinous measures of the *Scottish* minister. But I leave the affair of the *civil list* to a future exact discussion.

The last calumny, my lord, which I shall disprove, respects the actions at law against lord Halifax. It is said that I have neglected, or purposely discontinued them, since my exile. The imputation is totally groundless. I was so ill at Paris in the beginning of the year 1764, that it was impossible for me then to return to England alive, but I gave the most express orders that the law proceedings should be carried on with vigour, and in fact there was not a moment's delay. When my wound began to heal in the spring, I was dissuaded by all my friends from returning to a country, where the same administration, which had illegally

seized my person, plundered my house, and corrupted the fidelity of my servants, were still in full power. I yielded to these reasons, because *propter eorum scelus, nihil mihi intra meos parietes tutum, nihil infidiis vacuum viderem*. Lord Halifax for near two years availed himself of every advantage, which privilege and the chicane of law could furnish. He never entered any appearance to a court of justice, and the Common Pleas had, as far as they could, punished such an open contempt, such a daring proof that *Administration* would not submit to the *law of the land*, and had endeavoured to compel his lordship to appear. Towards the end of 1764 I was *outlaw'd*. The proceedings continued against his lordship till that hour. He then appeared, and his single plea was, that as an *outlaw*, I could not hold any action. No other defence was made against the heinous charge of having in my person violated the rights of the people. I felt this, my lord, as the most cruel stroke, which fortune had given me,

Justice had at length overtaken many of the inferior criminals, but my *out-lawry* prevented my punishing, the great, the capital offender, when after all his subterfuges, he was almost within my reach. I please myself however with the reflection that no minister has since dared to issue a GENERAL WARRANT, nor to sign an order for the SEIZURE OF PAPERS. In the one the personal liberty of every subject is immediately concerned. On the other may depend not only his own safety and property, but what will come still more home to a man of honour, the security, the happiness of those, with whom he is most intimately connected, their fortunes, their future views, perhaps secrets, the discovery of which would drive the coldest stoic to despair, their very existence possibly, all that is important in the public walk of life, all that is dear and sacred in friendship and in love. I was the *last* oppressed, but I was the *first* man, who had the courage to carry through a just resistance to these acts of despotism. Now

the opinions of our sovereign courts of justice are known and established. I rejoice that several others, who suffered before me, have since made their appeal to the laws, and obtained redress. I hope the iron rod of ministerial oppression is at length broken, and that I am the last victim of violence and cruelty. I shall not then regret all the sacrifices I have made, and my mind shall feast itself with the recollection in the unjust exile I am doom'd to suffer from my friends and my native land.

I will now, my lord, only add, however unfashionable such a declaration may be, that consistency shall never depart from my character, that to the last moment I will preserve the same fixed and unconquerable hatred to the enemies of freedom and the constitution of our happy island, the same warm attachment to the friends and the cause of liberty, that I keep a steady and a longing eye on England, that my endeavours for the good and service of my country, by every method left

me, shall have a period only with my life,
and that although I do not mean to lay
any future claim to your grace's favour, I
will take care to secure your esteem.

I am,

My lord,

Your grace's most obedient,

and very humble servant,

JOHN WILKE'S.

Gratias tibi, DEUS optime, maxime,
cujus nutu & imperio nata est & aucta
RES ANGLICANA, lubens lætusque ago,
LIBERTATE PUBLICA in hanc diem &
horam, per manus, quod voluisti, meas,
servatâ, eandem & in æternum serva, fove,
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A COLLECTION of such FUGITIVE ESSAYS and PAPERS as appear during the Month, and are deemed worthy of Preservation.



TO THE PUBLIC.

THE people of England, it is generally observed, are, of all nations in the world, the most addicted to Politics. The fact is certain, and the reason of it is evident. The English government is universally allowed to be one of the freest, that ever yet existed; and it will be found to be a maxim that will forever hold true, that the more free is the government, the more fond are the people of Politics. This disposition is only another name for their love of Liberty, and their zeal for its preservation; and therefore it ought surely, while kept within proper bounds, to be not only indulged, but in the highest degree encouraged: But, as the corruption of the best things is known to produce the worst, it ought, no doubt, at the same time, to be carefully regulated; for tho' the liberties of a nation have often fallen a sacrifice to the ambition of the prince, they have likewise been, sometimes, ruined by

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by the licentiousness of the subjects.—To direct the people, therefore, in the study of Politics, seems a task not unworthy of a lover of his country; and such is the chief design, which the authors profess in the work they now presume to offer to the Public.—In this they will endeavour, in a course of occasional Essays, to present to the reader, a distinct view of the English Constitution; to point out, as they proceed, the various improvements, which it has already received, and the still further, which it is capable of receiving; to shew the dangers which most nearly threaten it, and the most effectual means of guarding against them.—And in order the better to diversify this plan, to entertain the reader, and to enforce the arguments which they may happen to advance, they will give an account of the different forms of government, which at present prevail in the world; of the advantages and disadvantages, which are found to result from them; and of the several ties of interest and friendship, by which the states of Europe are supposed to be connected.—This, however, they very frankly acknowledge, will form but the smallest and (except, indeed, to the more intelligent reader) perhaps even the least entertaining part of the work; the bulk of which will be as usefully employed in giving a detail of the Politics of the day; of the various measures adopted by the government, with reflections on those measures; and an impartial review of such political books and pamphlets (in which every species of ill-nature and illiberal invective will be carefully avoided) as shall appear to deserve the attention of the public. Nor will the work be entirely confined to Politics; subjects of another nature will be admitted: essays on Agriculture, Manufactures, Commerce; and, in a word, all *The useful Arts*, as they are contradistinguished from the *The fine*, will occasionally find a place in this performance.—And tho' the authors have reason to think, that the materials which they have already prepared, and may still further prepare, and the channels of intelligence, which they have happily secured, will be sufficient to furnish a constant and regular supply, they yet beg leave to solicit the assistance of the learned and ingenious in every part of the kingdom; assuring them, at the same time, that the letters they shall communicate, will be gratefully received, and be duly inserted, without suffering any of those injudicious mutilations, which have been so long complained of in the management of other periodical productions.

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* * As this work will not only be useful at all times, but particularly entertaining to Gentlemen in the Country, during the ensuing recess of parliament, they may, by giving their address to the publisher, before they leave London, have it regularly transmitted to them at the beginning of every month.

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